

C I T Y   P L A N N I N G   C O M M I S S I O N   M I N U T E S

A U G U S T   2 1,   2 0 0 3

The regular meeting of the City Planning Commission convened Thursday, August 21, 2003, at 1:40pm in the City Council Chambers, 333 W. Ocean Boulevard.

**PRESENT: COMMISSIONERS:** Nick Sramek, Charles Greenberg  
Lynn Moyer, Charles Winn

**ABSENT: COMMISSIONERS:** Randal Hernandez, Morton Stuhlbarg

**CHAIRMAN:** Nick Sramek

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:** Fady Mattar, Acting Director  
Greg Carpenter, Zoning Officer  
Angela Reynolds, Advance Planning  
Craig Chalfant, Planner II

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mike Mais, Deputy City Attorney  
Reginald Harrison, Deputy City Mgr.  
Marcia Gold, Minutes Clerk

P L E D G E   O F   A L L E G I A N C E

Commissioner Winn led the pledge of allegiance.

S W E A R I N G   O F   W I T N E S S E S

P R E S E N T A T I O N

Deputy City Manager Reginald Harrison gave an update of the three-year financial plan and overview of the FY04 budget.

C O N S E N T   C A L E N D A R

The Consent Calendar was approved on a motion by Commissioner Winn, seconded by Commissioner Moyer and passed 4-0. Commissioners Hernandez and Stuhlbarg were absent.

**1A. GPC 8-21-03**

Applicant: 4<sup>th</sup> Street Loft Partners, LLC  
Subject Site: Near the intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
and Elm Avenue

Description: Finding of Conformity with the General Plan for the vacation of a public right-of-way.

Found the proposed dedication and vacation of the public right-of-way near the intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Elm Avenue in conformance with the General Plan.

## **R E G U L A R   A G E N D A**

### **2. Case No. 0306-25, Site Plan Review, Conditional Use Permit, Standards Variance, ND 20-03**

Applicant: Howard Farber, Alpert and Alpert  
Subject Site: 2350 W. 16<sup>th</sup> Street  
Description: Conditional Use Permit to allow a metal processing and recycling facility; Site Plan Review for construction of two metal canopy buildings approximately 6,000 sq.ft. and 18,200 sq.ft.; Standards Variance for 67 parking spaces (instead of 112 spaces); a 15' high fence along the perimeter of the property consisting of 12' of solid metal fence with 3' on concertina wire above (instead of not more than 12' in height); and relocation of an approximately 45' wide curb cut (instead of not more than 24' in width).

Craig Chalfant presented the staff report recommending approval of the project since it was an appropriate land use for the industrial location, and would provide a beneficial service to the City at large by accepting metal recyclable materials.

Howard Farber, Alpert and Alpert, 1815 South Soto Street, Los Angeles, 90023, applicant, requested that minor adjustments be made to condition 39 to address the facility type since they would accept recyclables but were not a collection center; expected processing activities, and the posted 24-hour telephone number.

Hugh J. Miles, 822 W. Gaylord, adjacent property owner, requested that the conditions not be changed in case there were any problems with the operation.

Deputy City Attorney Mais reminded the speaker that it was always within the power of the Commission to revoke the Conditional Use Permit if the use became a public nuisance.

Commissioner Winn disclosed that he had done business with Alpert and Alpert 40 years earlier, and stated he knew them to be a reputable operator.

Commissioner Winn then moved to certify Negative Declaration 20-03 and to approve the Conditional Use Permit, Site Plan Review and Standards Variance requests, subject to the modified conditions. Commissioner Greenberg seconded the motion, which passed 4-0. Commissioners Hernandez and Stuhlbarg were absent.

### **3. Case No. 0307-10, Conditional Use Permit, ND 13-03**

Applicant: Bill Ridgeway  
Subject Site: 201 W. Pacific Coast Highway  
Description: Request to establish a drive-through check cashing facility in an existing commercial building.

Greg Carpenter presented the staff report recommending denial of the request, since the site is located in a high crime-reporting district, and because the use would be detrimental to the surrounding community. Mr. Carpenter added that the area was already served by two existing check cashing facilities. He also pointed out that the applicant had presented at the last minute a large document that included a statement that his client was primarily a lender, and that actual check cashing only accounted for 8% of his overall business.

Commissioner Winn said he did not feel that a concentration of similar uses was a good enough reason to deny the application, given the lack of banks in the area, and pointed out that the client intended to fix up a long-vacant blighted building.

Jorge Ramirez, Community Planner, Central West Long Beach, named the existing check cashing facilities in the area.

Commander Johnson, Long Beach Police Department, stated that check cashing businesses tended to attract a criminal element that preyed on customers, creating a large amount of time-consuming police investigation. Commander Johnson added that the drive-through aspect was also a concern given the ease of forgery combined with the possibility of resulting vehicle pursuits.

Commissioner Winn noted that the client claimed to have had no police activity or issues at any of their other four locations.

Commissioner Greenberg added that based on the presentation, this specific client seemed to have a different kind of business than the usual check-cashing one, with less criminal problems as a result.

Bill Ridgeway, 5633 Sorrento, applicant, stated that the drive-through aspect of the operation had been eliminated based on neighborhood concerns, and he presented a petition signed by area residents in support of the application. Mr. Ridgeway also noted that although the Wrigley Homeowners Association had turned down his request for a meeting, he had collected the petition signatures on his own. He added that the expected customers would be middle-class area residents seeking bank-type services.

Michael McKnight, 9781 Magnolia, Riverside, CA 92503, Vice President, Payday Loans, noted that his corporation offered different and more upscale services than the traditional check cashing business, and did not deal in food stamps and other services that tended to attract criminal elements. Mr. McKnight added that his establishments were designed more like banks, with high standards of security to provide a safe environment for an upscale clientele.

In response to a query from Commissioner Winn, Mr. McKnight explained how the payday loan service worked, and noted that they did not tend to report the rare forgery because either their collection department worked on the case, or it was a small loss due to secured loans. He added that they enjoyed a 50% repeat business in established stores, and that they were willing to provide security if requested by the Police Department.

In response to a query from Commissioner Greenberg, Mr. McKnight agreed to a condition that the check cashing aspect of the operation could be terminated upon complaints by the Long Beach Police Department, and at the mandate of the Director of Planning and Building.

Chairman Sramek complained that due to the last-minute delivery of the copious amount of information on the item, both the Commission and staff were at a disadvantage without time to review or respond to new information.

Mr. Ridgeway apologized for the late documents, and explained that he had not received the staff report early enough to make a

timely response, but that he did not feel the information contained would affect decision-making.

Commissioner Winn suggested that the item be continued in order to discuss security and the removal of the check-cashing aspect.

Michael James, 2154 Pacific Avenue, representing the Wrigley Business Association, noted that the blighted location was at the gateway to the business district and needed to be cleaned up. Mr. James also stated that he had met with the applicant to suggest the addition of retail elements such as an ATM and stamps, plus a discussion of landscaping, security, lighting, loitering and littering.

Commissioner Greenberg moved to continue the public hearing to the September 18, 2003 meeting, and to direct staff to prepare findings for approval and recommended conditions of approval. Commissioner Winn seconded the motion.

Commissioner Moyer stated that she recognized the need for financial access in that area, and said she thought the business would revitalize an important corner.

Commissioner Winn suggested that staff check with police departments in the other areas served by Payday Loans.

Chairman Sramek asked that the Wrigley Homeowners Association give input on the issue.

Commissioner Greenberg said he thought this was an important test case, since it was the first time a forward-looking corporation was attempting to upgrade this problematic industry.

The question was called, and the motion passed 4-0. Commissioners Hernandez and Stuhlbarg were absent.

#### **M A T T E R S     F R O M     T H E     A U D I E N C E**

There were no matters from the audience.

#### **M A T T E R S     F R O M     T H E     D E P A R T M E N T     O F P L A N N I N G     A N D     B U I L D I N G**

Mr. Mattar outlined City Council activities and noted that Boeing had hired an environmental firm to handle the PacifiCenter project. Mr. Mattar also stated that negotiations

were ongoing regarding the type of residential units and the lot sizes.

Regarding the submittal of documents, Mr. Mattar agreed that the Commission needed more time to review larger submissions, but noted that the staff needed to be flexible to continue to accept minor changes at the last minute.

Angela Reynolds stated that a Mobility Consultant had been hired to start in October.

#### **M A T T E R S   F R O M   T H E   P L A N N I N G C O M M I S S I O N**

There were no matters from the Planning Commission.

#### **A D J O U R N**

The meeting adjourned at 3:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Gold  
Minutes Clerk